An Essay
on
Temperaments

Respectfully Submitted

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by

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The onward march of scientific investigation, indelibly impresses upon the mind the importance of more extended research in the vast laboratory of Nature, that truth in its simplicity, may be brought forth to guard us from error, and aid in correctly understanding the different phenomena presented to our observation.

In no department of human Knowledge, do we find at the present day, the necessity of this untiring research, more than in that pertaining to the study, of the real nature of man. He has been observed in all ages, and in every clime, possessing peculiar characteristics, that are exceedingly variable in the different members of each species, as well as in the different species, and correct observers, aware that by classification, great facility would be rendered to this important study, have attempted to arrange

the effects of the combination of the elements of his nature, which gives rise to such variation, under the head of what is now known as Temperaments.

The importance of this subject, has engaged the attention of the Medical profession more or less from the days of Hippocrates down to the present time; although until quite recently on account of the vast amount of observation needed, to guide the mighty Ship of Science aright, it seems that but little thought was bestowed upon this department, excepting by some of the great leading minds of the profession.

The Father of Medicine with his intuitive genius, perceived the necessity of some such classification of the human organism; accordingly he made a division, and gave to the World his ideas upon the subject, some of which must stand the test of all future ages. But it

could not be expected, that he in those early times, when there had been but little observation made, to substantiate any conclusion, could any more than lay the foundation, upon which posterity might rear the superstructure.

After his time the light which he gave glimmered unobserved in the distance, excepting as a ray occasionally flitted across the mind of some fertile genius like his own, to be reflected with increased brilliancy, that the subject might be thus kept in existence, as time rolled on, until finally continued investigation of human Physiology, should establish the truth of the great Fathers impressions.

So much observation has now been made, that the need of a division of the physical character of man, into a number of different parts, that should be represented by Temperaments, is generally admitted, for its importance in aiding to properly understand

life and its phenomena.—And many efforts have been made of late, by different authors, to settle every part of the subject satisfactorily to all, and leave it clear and expressive to the mind of the Student,—but the much desired object it is lamentable to say has never been attained.

There are scarcely any two writers who have ever written upon this subject, that correspond fully in their views upon any classifications that have been made, Some have made a division into three temperaments, to correspond to the three great visceral cavities, Cranial, Thoracic, and abdominal, Naming them successively Nervous, Sanguine, and Lymphatic, While others have made an addition of a fourth one to these, and called it the Bilious temperament, and still others again, have taken part of the character, that some have ascribed to the Bilious, and called it the Muscular temperament.

The majority of the characteristic signs, that

distinguish, the first, second, and third, constituents, of the foregoing division, each respectively, seems to be now generally accepted by most writers upon the subject, and they all accord to them the same center of action, and about the same character; but as their views are extended any farther and they attempt any more division, or addition, discrepancies arise, that appear impossible to settle. And the Student, aware of the confusion among his teachers, turns with regret from the interesting study, to await the progress of farther investigation, that every part of the subject, may be set in its true light.

Why all of this? Can it be possible that Nature has been observed, and interrogated correctly by all upon this point? Certainly not or there would be no discord. It seems reasonable to suppose that this subject, as well as all others, is governed by fixed and immutable laws, which if understood would allow of no contradiction. Our arguments

and theories are worse than useless, if Nature does not sustain them. She must decide all questions that may be raised by man, in reference to her phenomena, and it is for him who observes correct by, to bring the truth to view.

As there is much reason to believe, that the leading characters, of the Nervous, Sanguine, and Lymphatic temperaments, as above mentioned, are now correctly founded, and well understood, it only remains necessary to speak of these in short, and give a few of the signs of each, before bringing up the characters that have been assigned to the other two divisions, by their advocates.

In commencing the study of this branch, there is first to be observed a fundamental rule, that appears to hold good, so far as the subject may be considered firmly established. It is this, that the three temperaments, Nervous, Sanguine, and Lymphatic, are each made to depend upon a different part of the human structure,

from either of the others. In short, each represents a separate and entire System of itself, and casts an influence over the whole economy, according to its comparative Strength. Thus the Nervous, represents the Cerebro Spinal System entire, and thence radiating its character to the surface, gives as its language for man to read, a form of body adapted to quick and accurate motions, a fine texture, that is very susceptible to impressions, a sharp angularity of features, fine hair, disposed to arrange itself in Spiral ringlets, and lastly quickness of action both of body and mind, with a deep expressive blue eye. These are the most prominent Signs of this temperament, and will suffice for the present purpose, although a much more complete character might be delineated.

It will be borne in mind that the above condition is dependant upon a whole and complete System of itself, the Cerebro Spinal, and that it repre-

sents, all the peculiarities of that branch of the human organism, and can express no property, belonging to any other texture.

In view of the above facts the necessity arose to establish other temperaments, consequently the Sanguine was chosen to represent another branch of the economy, the lungs, heart, and blood vessels, the external signs of which must always indicate the same internal arrangement.

It offers for contemplation, the broad chest making large thoracic cavity, Moderate plumpness of person, Sandy or red hair, quick rolling roguish looking eye, ruddy complexion, and animated countenance, with lively, playful expression of features, and a great fondness for active life.

This also represents an entire system, which is expressed externally by the foregoing signs.

Upon a little reflection it will be observed that the whole physical character of Man is not yet portrayed to us, therefore a third, or Lymphatic

temperament, has been established, to represent the the Ganglionic, and glandular Systems combined as one, having the abdominal viscera as its center,
This is manifested externally by a predominance of adipose tissue, giving roundness and fulness to the whole figure;, Soft flabby muscle, greasy appearance, flaxen hair, dull inexpressive eye, features devoid of animation, very sluggish mental and physical action, in fact a general torpid nature, of which the following poetical sentiment is highly descriptive

"Twas my pleasure prayer and pride
That man might know how fat I died."

It is very evident, that this condition is dependant upon an entirely different arrangement from either of the preceding, and must always manifest the same, wherever it may be found.
Now in a recapitulation of the three above described temperaments, it is found that each depends upon an independant System, and can

represent no phenomena, only what belongs to that system. To illustrate, the Nervous represents the Cerebro Spinal system, with all its characteristics. The Sanguine, the Sanguineous circulatory system with the lungs as an appendage. And the Lymphatic temperament, represents the Ganglionic, or Sympathetic system, with the glands and lymphatics as appendages, in carrying on the functions of digestion, and nutrition,

It will be perceived at a glance, that the whole human structure is not embraced in the foregoing description. There is a very important part of it passed over unnoticed, which is the Osseous System with its appendages. This I am aware, is accounted for, by those who adopt the Bilious temperament, by choosing the large bone, as one of its leading indications; and by those who have established the Muscular temperament, by including it as one of the prominent characters. But in this, there is much confusion and contradiction.

For instance, we are taught by some, that the Bilious temperament represents all that is not included in the Nervous, Sanguine, and Lymphatic. They say that it embraces, the large Osseous development, the hard muscle, the dark swarthy coarse texture, the black coarse hair, and black eye, the cold distant disposition, yet all the ardor and emotional feelings of a Demosthenes, the enduring constitution, yet the weakly nature, great mental endurance, yet cold and listless in the advance of scientific improvement. And if one professing a Knowledge of this, as it has been taught, were asked the temperament of a person, who had large bone, and hard muscle, with light hair he would say it was the Bilious, because there was the leading indication of it, the large osseous structure, and if required to pass a decision, upon another of small frame, and withered dried up appearance of features with lightish

hair, and eyes, which are indications of a hardy constitution, he would say it was also the Bilious temperament, for such a person can endure a great amount of physical exertion. And again, if his attention was called, to the one, with dark complexion, black hair and eyes, and any form or size of body, he would unhesitatingly decide, that such a condition certainly indicated the Bilious temperament, because such a person, had a fault finding disposition, was cold and distant in his manner towards others, was hard to excite, and of a generally unhealthy appearance. Here we have exhibited to us three very different conditions of the human system, that are said to be represented by one temperament, a confusion strongly contrasting with that harmony, which is found in the first three temperaments spoken of, and the signs that are mentioned, as characterizing them. Is it possible for us to advance in any depart-

ment of science, if we embrace such contradictions, when endeavoring to explain a subject? It is not allowing an isolated class of facts to always express the same thing, and is expressing entirely different and even contrary conditions by the same term.

The Bilious temperament is a diseased condition, or a condition very susceptible to diseased action, and has no connection with large osseous structure, prominence of cheek bones, hard muscle, or endurance of physical or mental action, neither has it any thing to do with ardor of feeling, or mental emotions, any farther than diseased action steps in to modify these manifestations. As proof of this conclusion, I will offer common observation. For instance we will observe the child that possesses the Bilious temperament, and follow it through life, to ascertain if it ever reaches an advanced age, which it is highly probable, would never be found

to occur, if we had correct statistics upon this subject, that we could consult.

Again it is a common remark, substantiated by observation, that people of southern or tropical climes, possess the dark hair, swarthy appearance, and all that class of characteristic indications, that are looked for in the Bilious temperament, much more common than it is found in the North, and so are well aware, they are far more liable to disease, and have more malignant diseases among them, Also that they do not live, to that advanced age, of the Northern classes.

Furthermore, those possessing some of the other temperaments more fully developed, in removing from the North, to the South, are generally more or less changed to the dark swarthy condition, by a long residence there, and are much reduced in their powers of endurance.

Here arises a circumstance worthy of consideration, which is, that the Bilious temperament is much

more commonly met with, in the Western as well as Southern States, than it is in New York, or the New England States, yet the great majority of the Western population, is made up by those originally from these last mentioned States, thus showing a great change, by a few years residence in that climate. It may be asked what has given rise to such a change, I offer as an explanation of this result, that the miasmatic climate of the West, produces an alteration in almost every person going there from the East, inducing a diseased condition, most generally of the sanguineous system, thereby producing the dark swarthy or Bilious appearance. This appears the more reasonable, as the intermittents of that climate have such a marked action upon the circulatory system, causing an unbalanced condition between the arterial and venous circulation, which effects the whole constitution, and gives rise to the various fevers and other distant Malarious

After this digression, we will return to the subject, and take up for consideration the Muscular temperament, that has been established by some, to represent the Muscular System, having as its leading signs, the large Structure, fully developed muscle, and great physical power. But this name seems objectionable, as the Sanguineous, and Lymphatic Systems, enter largely into the formation of the bulk of muscle, besides the Sanguine temperament has the moderately plump muscle, which is rather dense, while the Lymphatic has the full soft flabby muscle, all of which would, be indiscriminately ~~be~~ included under the Muscular temperament if it were adopted, thus giving rise to much confusion, and also leaving the whole osseous Structure, without any representation, Therefore to avoid any complication, and account for every tissue of the body, so that the whole subject may be rendered clear, I would suggest, that the Muscular tempera-

ment be discarded, and an Osseous temperament established, to represent the Osseous System, with its appendages, the cartilages, ligaments, tendons, and Muscular fiber itself, seperate from adipose or vascular tissue.

The characteristic signs of this temperament, then, are, a well defined osseous structure, high chukbones, a hard textured muscle, Strong chordy tendons, proportionally large hand, with rather long, heavy blunt fingers, coarse texture of the Skin, coarse harsh brown hair, with harshly expressed outline of features, all of which indicate a Strong constitution, and great powers of physical endurance.

This class of persons, are found most numerous in cold Mountainous climes, and withstand the hardships, consigment upon their mode of life, with seeming impunity. and attain, on an avarage, to a much more advanced age, than those of other regions, where the other temperaments predominate more,

We thus have with this classification, every part of the human system represented, and presented to our observation, under but the four temperaments, Nervous, Sanguine, Sympathic, and Osseous, each of which represents that part of the system, which its name signifies, and the four embrace all the tissues, classed off according to the arrangement made by Nature,—And the Bilious existing as a condition very susceptible of diseased action, an unbalanced action of the circulatory system, the veins being langid and not performing its functions properly, which gives rise to fulness of the superficial veins, and the dark or swarthy hue. Therefore it may be considered as a circumstantial condition, and not Normal

As the idea appears to be now generally received by the Homeopathic profession that temperaments modify both the pathogenetic and therapeutic action of Medicinal agents

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the necesity arises that the subject should be thoroughly investigated, and well established that every member of the profession may fully understand it, so that the temperament of every prover of medicine could be hereafter given with the provings; and also that when there are very marked cases of cure reported the temperament of the patient might be correctly stated.

Having had my attention especially called to the subject of temperaments and finding much difference of opinion among authorities upon the point, as well as a want of regular classification, by which a student might be guided to correct conclusions, I have been led by observation, and information from other sources, to adopt the views above expressed, and humbly submit them for your honorable consideration.